

## Small Businesses Affected by Military Call-Ups Can Get Online Assistance From SBA

Small business owners or small businesses with essential employees who have been or can be called to active duty by the Reserve or National Guard can get online assistance through a new Web page developed by the SBA Office of Veterans Business Development.

The Web page is part of a larger, comprehensive push by OVBD to provide members of the National Guard and Reserve who own or are an essential employee of a small business with timely information on all SBA programs and services available to them if and when they are called to active duty during a period of military conflict.

Since the attacks on America on September 11, 2001, more than 100,000 Reserve and National Guard members have been called to active duty. In anticipation of additional call-ups, the SBA has taken these steps to ensure that eligible small businesses are informed of these services.

The site has information on debt relief, disaster assistance loans, business counseling and training, and other SBA resources.

For more information about assistance for businesses with key employees in the National Guard or Reserve, visit the new Web site at [www.sba.gov/reservists](http://www.sba.gov/reservists).

For more information about SBA programs and services for veteran-owned businesses, visit the OVBD Web site at [www.sba.gov/VETS](http://www.sba.gov/VETS), or call Paul Bouchard, the SBA Veterans Business Development Officer in the Rhode Island District Office, at (401) 528-4691.

## Entrepreneurs and Advocates Honored During Minority Enterprise Development Week



**James Vincent**, (third from left), receives the **SBA Special Achievement Award** during the MED Week Awards Dinner celebration. Congratulating Vincent were, from left, RI General Treasurer **Paul Tavares**, SBA Regional Administrator **Jeffrey H. Butland**, **Juana Horton**, co-chair of the MED Week Committee, SBA District Director **Mark S. Hayward**, and MED Week co-chair **Charles Newton**.

Several hundred people attended the Rhode Island Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Awards Dinner at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet in Cranston on January 22. The dinner highlighted the week-long celebration that included a Congressional breakfast, and a series of free professional development workshops.

Sussy DeLeon, owner of RE/MAX New Horizons Realty was honored as the 2003 Rhode Island Minority Small Business Person of the Year.

The SBA Special Achievement Award was

presented to James Vincent, Manager of Constituent Advocacy at the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation, for his many years of dedication to the minority community.

Awards were also presented by several private organizations and the State of Rhode Island to Minority small business owners and advocates.

MED Week is proclaimed annually by the President of the United States to recognize the outstanding achievements of minority business enterprises and to honor corporations

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**Continued from Page 1:****Rhode Island MED Week Celebration**

and financial institutions that support minority business development.

This year's MED Week celebration was co-sponsored by the Northern RI Chamber of Commerce, the Central RI Chamber of Commerce, the RI Hispanic-American Chamber of Commerce, and the RI Minority Business Enterprise Compliance Office.



**Rosario Canning** accepts the Minority Small Business Person of the Year Award for Sussy DeLeon who was out of the

Professional development workshops were scheduled around the state and included sessions on Internet marketing, federal government procurement, measuring sales, and a Spanish-language workshop on small business strategies.



**Charles Newton**, co-chair of the MED Week Planning Committee, (far left) introduces the panelists at the Congressional

A Congressional Breakfast was held at Kirkbrae Country Club in Lincoln during which nearly 100 members of the minority small business community, business leaders, and

advocates exchanged dialogue with representatives of the Rhode Island Congressional delegation.

Other awards and recipients that were presented during the annual dinner were: RI Manufacturing Extension Services Award for Manufacturing Excellence to Betty Goyette, President of Allmark International, Inc.; RI Hispanic-American Chamber of Commerce Hispanic Small Business Person of the Year to Jorge Sanchez, Executive Director, Hispanic Yellow Pages of RI; Ocean State Business Forum Outstanding Business Practitioner Award to Sharon Conard-Wells, Executive Director, West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation; RI Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation Affirmative Action Award to Joseph Caffey, Executive Director, OMNI Development Corporation; and the State of Rhode Island Minority Business Enterprise of the Year Award to Harry Eng, President, Blueline Construction Company.

**SBA Regional Administrator Pledges to Work with Rhode Island Officials to Assist Small Business**

SBA Regional Administrator **Jeffrey H. Butland** (left) discusses small business issues with Rhode Island Governor **Donald Carcieri**.

**T**he New England Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration met with Rhode Island Governor Donald Carcieri, Secretary of State Matthew Brown, and Attorney General Patrick Lynch recently to discuss issues affecting the state's small business community. Regional Administrator Jeffrey H. Butland expressed his commitment to the governor to continue encouraging greater access to capital and increased entrepreneurship, using the Agency's resources to enhance economic development.

During his meeting with Governor Carcieri, Butland discussed potential partnerships to help stimulate Rhode Island's economy and nurture the small business community. More than 98 percent of Rhode Island's businesses are small by SBA's size standards.

The discussion with Secretary of State Brown centered on legislation that would create an independent state small business regulatory fairness board. The board would monitor the impact that proposed regulations and laws would have on the small business community.

Small businesses are often burdened with time consuming paperwork and compliance costs associated with laws and regulations. A regulatory fairness board could help minimize those burdens by urging state agencies to consider the impact a proposed rule would have on the small business community. The SBA oversees ten regional regulatory fairness boards at the federal level.

The Regional Administrator proposed that SBA co-sponsor a series of workshops on fraud and identity theft during the meeting with Attorney General Patrick Lynch. These crimes cost small businesses millions of dollars each year.

Butland manages SBA District Offices in the six New England states and has oversight of the SBA's financing, marketing and outreach efforts in the region. Prior to becoming regional administrator in January 2002, Butland was an operational analyst for L.L. Bean in Freeport, Maine. He served in the Maine House of Representatives from 1988 to 1992 and the Maine Senate from 1992 to 1998. Butland was the Senate President during 1995-1996.



## SBA to Participate in Homeland Security Business Conference

The Rhode Island Homeland Security Conference & Expo will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Goat Island in Newport, RI on Monday, March 24, 2003. The conference, sponsored by Senator Jack Reed and First District Congressman Patrick Kennedy, will encourage businesses throughout the state, both large and small, to play a key role in the defense of our nation. The day-long event will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Unlike other expositions designed for a one-way flow of information, the summit and expo is designed to provide an opportunity for business leaders and federal government representatives, including the new Department of Homeland Security, to share and exchange innovative ideas, products and services.

Workshop sessions will be led by government representatives and business leaders. Approximately 400-500 participants are expected for the expo and conference.

Patricia O'Rourke, Team Leader for Marketing and Outreach at the SBA Rhode Island District Office, will participate in a breakout session on Resources and Opportunities for Women, Minority and Small Businesses to be held from 2-3 p.m.

The summit and expo is open to the public and free to attend, but there is a \$25 charge to cover the cost of lunch. Please email questions to **Jennifer Schroeder**, or call (202)467-2779, or visit the Web site at [www.publicforuminstitute.org](http://www.publicforuminstitute.org).

## SBA Offers Counseling at the Central RI Chamber of Commerce

A SBA economic development specialist from the Rhode Island District Office will be available to offer free counseling to entrepreneurs at the Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce.

Beginning on March 3, 2003, Jaime Aguayo will schedule appointments on Mondays and Tuesdays between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The Central Rhode Island Chamber is located at 3288 Post Road in the Apponaug section of Warwick.

"The SBA is pleased to provide this service to entrepreneurs who want advice about starting or growing a small business," said Mark S. Hayward, Director of the Rhode Island District Office. "Jaime has over 25 years of experience at the SBA, and will provide valuable information about available small business resources and the many SBA programs and services," Hayward added.

SBA resource partners will also be available by appointment to assist entrepreneurs. They include counselors from SCORE, consultants from the Rhode Island Small Business Development Center, and the Center for Women and Enterprise.

To schedule an appointment with Jaime Aguayo, contact the Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce at (401) 732-1100.



## RISBDC Small Business Workshops Target the Latino Community



Photo by RILatino.com

**Adriana Isaza Dawson** (center), Assistant Director of the RISBDC, discusses business basics during a Spanish language workshop.

The Rhode Island Small Business Development Center (RISBDC) has created small business workshops targeted to the Latino community. The first-ever Spanish language workshops were held in December. An extended 10-week course began in January. The sessions are being held at Progreso Latino in Central Falls.

The first Spanish language series featured three workshops on business basics. Forty-seven Latinos—shop owners, those planning to start a business and those thinking about it—enrolled in the pilot program.

RISBDC State Director Robert Hamlin said the center's plan is to attract Latino business owners and potential business owners in the Blackstone Valley and Providence by offering workshops in Spanish.

The pilot workshop series covered the business plan, marketing plan, and financial plan. The students were awarded certificates at a ceremony in Central Falls City Hall.

For more information about the Spanish language workshops, call the RISBDC at (401) 232-6923.

## Federal Contracting Training and Trade Show in Providence April 15

A training conference and trade show designed to provide an opportunity for small businesses to meet with representatives of federal purchasing agencies will be held in Providence on Tuesday, April 15, 2003. The conference will be held at the Rhode Island Convention Center from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The event sponsor, Alliance-Mid-Atlantic, will provide opportunities to meet buyers and contracting officers from major military bases, the surrounding states and large companies to discuss business opportunities.

For details, the conference schedule, participants, and on-line registration, visit [www.allianceforbiz.com](http://www.allianceforbiz.com).

## **FY 04 BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR SBA OFFERS \$21 BILLION IN SMALL BUSINESS FINANCING**

**P**resident Bush's proposed FY 2004 budget for the U.S. Small Business Administration provides nearly \$21 billion in support for small business financing, as well as increased funding for priority initiatives that will make the agency more customer-centric.

The budget proposes a total FY 2004 appropriation of \$797.9 million, maintaining the spending level proposed for FY 2003, and roughly 4 percent larger than the budget for FY 2002.

The budget includes commitments for more than \$20.8 billion in small business loans, loan guarantees and venture capital, and more than \$760 million in new disaster loan funds for victims of natural disasters. Included in that amount is funding for \$9.3 billion in guaranteed loans under the 7(a) program. The budget proposal includes more than \$115 million for the agency's technical assistance programs, including Small Business Development Centers and the Service Corps of Retired Executives.

The budget also proposes funding for key agency operational and organizational priorities. These initiatives include e-government, training and operational transformation plans designed to streamline the agency's delivery of services, free up more employees to directly work with small businesses, and allow more small businesses to access the services they need to succeed.

## **Small Fishermen Win Reprieve with NMFS Decision**



**Barbara H. Manning**  
Regional Advocate

**S**mall New England fishermen have won a reprieve with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) decision to give the industry five extra years to rebuild depleted stocks of cod and other groundfish. Thomas M. Sullivan, the SBA Chief Counsel for Advocacy, had called for such an action in an earlier letter to the Council.

"A less burdensome way to rebuild groundfish stocks has been found by considering the concerns of small fishermen in the regulatory process," said Barbara H. Manning, New England Regional Advocate for the Office of Advocacy. "Well managed fisheries depend on sound science, and it appears the recent decision by NMFS will allow scientists the time necessary to assess the strength of the various species. I applaud them for their decision," Manning said.

For more information and the complete text of the letter, call Barbara Manning at (617)565-8418, or visit the Office of Advocacy Web site at [www.sba.gov/advo](http://www.sba.gov/advo).

### **SBA Communicator Subscription Renewal Form**

**In order to continue receiving your free copy of the *SBA Communicator* each month, please complete this form and return it to the SBA by fax at (401) 528-4539 or by mail to SBA Communicator, U.S. Small Business Administration, 380 Westminster Street, Room 511, Providence, RI 02903.**

**Forms must be received by March 14, 2003 in order to continue your subscription**

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## From the Director's Desk



The Rhode Island District Office has made a few staff changes in anticipation of our joining the pilot workforce transformation, which will involve more extensive marketing and outreach activities in the community.

We still have three teams and below you will find their focus and responsibilities:

**Team I:** Responsible for in-house loan processing/general training for lenders and small businesses and review of participating lenders.

Team Leader: Marilyn Bogue

Team Members: Bill Thorne and Carol Parkhurst

**Team II:** Responsible for Servicing and Liquidation, but will also assist in our outreach and marketing efforts. The team will staff the Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, and will coordinate our outreach to veterans.

Team Leader: Paul Bouchard

Team Members: Jaime Aguayo, Tim Yentsch, and Faith White.

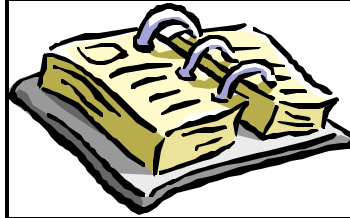
**Team III:** The primary coordinator of outreach and marketing. The team is responsible for arranging all major events, business expos, and outreach to Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns. The team will have coordination responsibility for our resource partners including the business information centers, SBDC, SCORE and the Center for Women & Enterprise.

Team Leader: Patricia O'Rourke

Team Members: Norm Deragon, Fran deSousa, and Virginia Thimas.

Gary Pacheco, Administrative Officer and Information Resource Manager, will also manage the District Office web-site. He has begun that effort and has made the Rhode Island District Office web site user friendly. I encourage you to take a look the new "reformatted" site by visiting [www.sba.gov/ri](http://www.sba.gov/ri).

Again as always, thank you for your support.



## Calendar Of Events

Saturday, March 8, 15, 22, 29 10:00 a.m.–12 Noon

### **The MicroBusiness Revolution Begins Here!**

Knight Memorial Library, 275 Elmwood Ave., Providence

Attendees receive training in business planning, marketing, business finance, and business growth strategies. They also learn how they can translate their dreams into an exciting and fulfilling enterprise. Fee: **FREE**

Presented by the RI MicroEnterprise Association. Register by calling (401) 598-2256, or at [www.rimicroenterprise.org](http://www.rimicroenterprise.org).

Thursday, March 13, 2003 9:00 a.m.-12 Noon

### **Bulk Business Mail Workshop**

Main Post Office, 24 Corliss Street, Providence

The workshop will familiarize mailers with procedures for obtaining bulk permits, presorting options, and will include sack/tray labeling, postage statement preparation and documentation requirements. Mail-piece design and address quality requirements will also be included. Fee: **FREE**

Pre-registration is required. Call (800)755-2398.

Wednesday, March 19, 2003 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

### **Networking Forum**

Center for Women and Enterprise, 55 Claverick Street, Suite 102, Providence, RI Fee: **FREE**

Held every 3rd Wednesday for aspiring and start-up business owners. An open forum for new entrepreneurs to meet and discuss business, test ideas, refocus, and rejuvenate. The sessions are open to all and are very informal. Pre-registration is required. Call (401) 277-0800.

Wednesday, March 26, 2003 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

### **SBA/IRS Workshop: Sole Proprietors and Partnerships**

Newport County Chamber of Commerce, RISBDC Office 45 Valley Road, Middletown, RI Fee: **FREE**

The workshop will cover the tax reporting requirements for sole proprietors and partnerships. The program includes an overview of SBA programs and services and How to Write a Winning Business Plan. Pre-registration is required.

Register by calling the SBA at (401) 528-4561.

**For an updated listing of workshops and small business events, visit the SBA Rhode Island District Office Web site at: [www.sba.gov/ri](http://www.sba.gov/ri)**





## Rhode Island Success Story

### Good Feet Store

*Smithfield, Rhode Island*

After working in the corporate world for more than 20 years, Jeanine Vigeant decided she wanted to work for herself. She began searching for ideas and wanted to find a product or service that would help people. She found it in Good Feet.

Arthritic knees were causing her considerable pain and swelling while exercising. A friend told her about the Good Feet Store. The arch supports she purchased there provided instant relief. That was the beginning of her entrepreneurial journey.

Jeanine acquired the Rhode Island and Connecticut territory from Good Feet and relocated from San Diego, California to Rhode Island in March 2001. It was a homecoming of sorts since Jeanine is a Massachusetts native.

"People typically come to The Good Feet Store with tired feet, sore legs, sore back and total body discomfort," said Vigeant. "Nearly 87 percent of the population suffers from foot related problems, most of which are caused by wearing improper footwear, walking on hard surfaces for long periods of time, being overweight or sports injuries," Jeannine added.

By the summer she opened her Good Feet store on South Main Street in Providence. Jeanine soon realized that the old adage about location, location, location was exactly right. Parking was not adequate and customers had a difficult time reaching her store. Sales were sagging and the tragic events on September 11, 2001 didn't help sales. Jeannine knew that she had to do something soon or face the possibility of going out of business.

Jeanine began a search for a better location and soon found a store near the Apple Valley Mall in Smithfield. She secured a \$25,000 SBA MicroLoan through the Rhode Island Coalition for Minority Investment and opened at the new location in December 2001. Vigeant was also able to get out of her lease at the South Main Street store, which made the relocation much easier.

The move did not solve the sales problem immediately. Sales at the end of January were just \$22,000. She attended a Good Feet conference in California and came back energized. Sales soon soared and by the end of April 2002 totaled \$64,000 for the month and Jeanine was named the Good Feet Dealer of the Month.

By mid-May, Vigeant opened her second store in Groton, CT, using the profits from her Smithfield store. The Connecticut store was an instant success and in October 2002, Jeanine opened her third store on Route 6 in Seekonk, MA, once again using the profits from her Rhode Island and



**Jeanine Vigeant**, (right) demonstrates the importance of proper foot alignment to a customer.

Jeanine has done so well that in November 2002 the Good Feet Corporation named her the 2002 Dealer of the Year.

Vigeant said that it would have been easy to give up when her business didn't meet expectations at first. She believed in her product and that made the difference.

Good Feet products were designed by an expert team of foot specialists and researchers, and are worn, approved and recommended by chiropractors, podiatrists and doctors. The products help people from all walks of life - firemen, police officers, postal workers, nurses and teachers. They fit well in tennis shoes, sneakers, basketball shoes, dress shoes, slippers, boots, and high heels— footwear of all types.

"If your feet are not properly balancing your body weight, the rest of your skeletal structure becomes misaligned," Jeanine said. "However, when your feet are correctly positioned, your skeletal structure is in proper alignment and your body weight is better balanced, giving you the benefits of comfort, balance and support," Vigeant added.

Jeanine said she doesn't want to grow too fast. She will soon open a satellite store near the East Bay bike path in Barrington, RI to support the Seekonk store. Meanwhile, she continues to look at other locations in the area for the next Good Feet Store.



## Rhode Island District Office BankRank

*FY03 7(a) Approved Loan Volume by Lenders and Number of Loans 10/1/02 to 1/31/03*

|   |            |                     |
|---|------------|---------------------|
| 1. Citizens Bank of Rhode Island            | 252        | \$6,644,000         |
| 2. Fleet Bank                               | 42         | \$3,277,900         |
| 3. BankRI                                   | 17         | \$1,997,000         |
| 4. Coastway Credit Union                    | 13         | \$2,047,800         |
| 5. The Washington Trust Company             | 10         | \$1,675,000         |
| 6. Sovereign Bank New England               | 8          | \$1,125,000         |
| 7. CIT Small Business Lending               | 3          | \$1,022,000         |
| 8. Minority Investment Development Corp.    | 3          | \$307,000           |
| 9. Enterprise Capital Corporation           | 2          | \$578,750           |
| 10. First International Bank                | 2          | \$457,500           |
| 11. Freedom National Bank                   | 2          | \$400,000           |
| 12. Home Loan and Investment Bank           | 2          | \$390,000           |
| 13. Business Lenders LLC                    | 2          | \$265,000           |
| 14. Capital One F.S.B.                      | 2          | \$75,000            |
| 15. Bank of Fall River                      | 1          | \$760,000           |
| 16. Business Loan Express                   | 1          | \$450,000           |
| 17. Greenwood Credit Union                  | 1          | \$250,000           |
| 18. Bank of Newport                         | 0          |                     |
| 19. Bristol County Savings Bank             | 0          |                     |
| 20. Business Dev. Co. of Rhode Island       | 0          |                     |
| 21. Centreville Savings Bank                | 0          |                     |
| 22. Domestic Bank                           | 0          |                     |
| 23. First Federal Savings Bank              | 0          |                     |
| 24. First Trade Bank                        | 0          |                     |
| 25. First Union Small Business Capital      | 0          |                     |
| 26. GE Capital Small Business Finance Corp. | 0          |                     |
| 27. Newport Federal Savings Bank            | 0          |                     |
| 28. Slade's Ferry Bancorp                   | 0          |                     |
| 29. Small Business Loan Source, Inc.        | 0          |                     |
| <b>Sub-Total:</b>                           | <b>363</b> | <b>\$21,721,950</b> |

### Ocean State Business Development Authority

*Ocean State Business Development Authority is a Certified Development Company licensed by the SBA. The following lenders approved first mortgage financing on economic development projects, thereby facilitating the 504 loans listed below from 10/1/02 through 1/31/03.*

| Lender                        | Number<br>Loans | SBA<br>Debenture   | Total<br>Project   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Bank RI                       | 2               | \$1,472,000        | \$3,565,000        |
| First Trade Union Bank        | 1               | \$558,000          | \$1,350,000        |
| Fleet Bank                    | 1               | \$537,000          | \$1,300,000        |
| Home Loan and Investment Bank | 1               | \$142,000          | \$390,000          |
| The Washington Trust Company  | 2               | \$783,000          | \$2,073,000        |
| Coastway Credit Union         | 2               | \$348,000          | \$887,500          |
| <b>Total 504 Loans</b>        | <b>9</b>        | <b>\$3,840,000</b> | <b>\$9,565,500</b> |

|                    |            |                     |
|--------------------|------------|---------------------|
| <b>Total Loans</b> | <b>372</b> | <b>\$25,561,950</b> |
|--------------------|------------|---------------------|

**U.S. Small Business Administration**  
**Rhode Island District Office**  
380 Westminster Street, Room 511  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

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**PRESORTED STANDARD  
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## ***SBA Communicator***

*News from the Rhode Island District Office*

**February 2003**

### **District Director**

Mark S. Hayward

### **Editor**

Normand T. Deragon

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**[www.sba.gov/ri](http://www.sba.gov/ri)**



**David Piacitelli, President of Top Line Systems** (standing), makes a point during the Small Business Sales workshop held at Garden City Center in Cranston. The workshop was one of a series of professional development workshops that were part of the Rhode Island Minority Enterprise Development Week celebration.